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ABSTRACT

Every form of communication involves the use of myths, symbols, or stereotypes. Symbols have been used as instruments to measure artistic works, from film to painting, from high literature to television programs. Stereotypes are communication short-cuts which allow communication to engender images without the use of full description by the artist. Myths occur in communication as the synthesis of a cultural history conveyed in majority values and beliefs. Both high art and popular art utilize these images, but the ways that popular art uses them are affected directly by structure, social worth, and social mobility. High culture is less likely to be limited in its utilization of these images than is mass culture because high art functions with fewer social restraints. Physical restraints on artistic output become obvious when comparing creative techniques used in various media. Content can be viewed in terms of the physical and social structure of the medium, but there is also an important structural consideration in a work of popular art itself. Most observers of popular art define the inherent structure of that art as formulaic. By more carefully examining these images in popular art, we can learn more about values in society and about the various audiences to whom a particular kind of popular art appeals. (HOD)

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MYTHS, SYMBOLS, STEREOTYPES: THE ARTIST AND THE MASS MEDIA

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MYTHS, SYMBOLS, STEREOTYPES: THE ARTIST AND THE MASS MEDIA

Every form of communication involves, to some extent, the use of myths, symbols or stereotypes. Birdwhistell, in his book Kinesics and Content noted that ". . . communication can be regarded in the broadest sense as a structural system of significant symbols (from all the sensorily based modalities) which permit ordered human interactions."[1] Discussions of myths, symbols and stereotypes center around recurring patterns--some recurring patterns are simple and easily decipherable while others are complex orderings.

Concerning myths and symbols, John Cawelti explained: ". . . a symbol or a myth is simply a generalizing concept for summarizing certain recurrent patterns in writing and other forms of expression. Insofar as it explains anything, the myth-symbol approach simply indicates that a group of persons has a tendency to express itself in patterns."[2] Myths occur in communications as the synthesis of a cultural history conveyed in majority values and beliefs; myths occur many times in daily communications as the unconscious strivings to fulfill those values and beliefs nurtured over time.

Symbols are the basic building blocks of any communication, and just as myths, they may be simple or very complex. Cawelti elucidated: ". . . symbols . . . are defined as images or patterns of images charged with a complex of feeling and meaning and they become, therefore, modes of perception as well

as simple reflections of reality."[3] Symbols have been used as instruments to measure artistic works from film to painting to high literature to television programs.

Stereotypes are encountered in nearly all forms of communication as a means of conveying a limited message in a short form; stereotypes are communication short-cuts which allow communication to engender images without the effort of full description by the artist. Stereotypes have been particularly associated with popular art and researchers have offered analyses of stereotypes in everything from Playboy and Penthouse magazines to stereotypes found in children's coloring books. In general, the artist of high culture assumes the burden of complex descriptions while the artist of popular culture uses symbols which have a commonly held cultural understanding and require minimal delineation.

When considering myths, symbols and stereotypes in mass media, it may first be helpful to document some of the characteristics which define one artifact as a piece of popular art and another artifact as high cultural art. Most writers who have attempted to decipher the differences between the products of high culture and those of mass culture have found distinctions. One of the most striking differences is in the structure of the work itself. A piece of high cultural art is extremely inventive and may be greatly or slightly different in structure from the work of any other artist or even different from any other work produced by the same artist. While structure is only one aspect of high art, popular art is dominated by its structure; the structures of mass cultural products occur and recur in the works of

many authors. The works of William Faulkner or Willa Cather, for example, may support volumes of criticism on structure, while one episode of television's Perry Mason is closely related structurally to every other episode of Perry Mason and closely related to nearly every other TV mystery/detective program.

The test-of-worth of the two types of art also varies. David Madden, in his article "The Aesthetics of Popular Culture" wrote: "The aesthetic attitude of high culture is effort of popular culture is receptivity."[4] High culture is indeed measured by complexity of invention which constitutes effort. There have been some questions about whether writer Joyce Carol Oats is a writer of high culture or a writer of mass culture because, while her works may be complex and inventive, she produces very rapidly. At least one critic has faulted her with producing too rapidly. A popular artist, on the other hand, is measured by the audience that her/his product attracts and by the rapidness with which the object can be produced. Norman Lear is considered the finest of popular artists because his programs get high Nielson ratings and because he is prolific.

Social mobility is another distinctive characteristic of the arts. Mass culture enjoys a freedom of social mobility unknown to high culture; this social mobility functions both in terms of audience compostion and audience size. A product of mass culture may be enjoyed by the uneducated and by the highly educated whereas a product of high culture is apt to be enjoyed by a limited audience of scholars and university students. High culture moves slowly to influence a society while mass culture can be

revolutionary in its ability to influence a society quickly and completely. A great work of literature or a great painting may not be realized as such or may not directly affect a society for decades, while mass culture is seen in terms of immediate effect. Horace Newcomb in his book TV the Most Popular Art wrote: "Both the visionaries and the social scientists have seen television as a thing, an influence in people's lives. They have sought to measure, predict, restrain, or foster aspects of that influence."[5] Many researchers have noted that mass media have been evaluated in terms of social effect and not in terms of artistic value. Concerning this Elihu Katz and David Foulkes observed: "It is a most intriguing fact in the intellectual history of social research that the choice was made to study mass media as agents of persuasion rather than agents of entertainment."[6] Because of its social mobility, mass art has tended to fall under the research domain of the social scientist, and not the domain of the humanists.

Both mass art and high art serve a multiplicity of functions including: entertainment; expressions of social concern; expressions of cultural values; and, as cultural artifacts. As noted above, both high art and popular art utilize myths, symbols and stereotypes, but the ways that popular art utilizes myths, symbols and stereotypes is affected directly by structure, social-worth and social mobility.

Structure in popular art can be discussed in terms of: 1) social structure of the medium; 2) physical structure of the medium; and 3) internal structure of the medium product itself. Indeed, these three structural considerations have a greater bearing on myths, symbols and stereotypes in

popular art than any other factors. The contents of popular art can be defined by these three structural considerations. The social structure of the medium is determined by its economics, its management goals and management personalities, its potential audiences, its historical growth and development and its particular social functions. Television art, for example, is characterized by: its commercial status; its governmental regulations; its competitiveness; and its founding principle that the air waves belong to the American public as a whole--not to the station owner. These four characteristics dictate the type of programming that will appear on commercial television. In order for a commercial network to be competitive, it must air those programs that are apt to draw large audiences, since advertising dollars are usually dictated by audience size. Financial competitiveness causes the networks to walk a tight line in the presentation of social values for two reasons. First, if the social values presented within a program are adhered to only by a small segment of the potential viewing audience, the masses may become disinterested, disenchanted or angry and tune the program out, thus losing the high advertising dollars that the program could draw if it attracted the masses rather than alienated them. If a network decided to be daring and air a program showing social values not commonly held, the advertiser willing to settle for a relatively small share of the potential audience might be forced to abandon the program for fear that such values may be associated by the general public with the advertised product and thus be detrimental to product sales. This situation makes it difficult for ideas not in the mainstream of American thought and

action to find sponsors. If the networks aired social values that were contrary to those generally accepted by the majority of Americans, the public might petition the FCC to encourage the networks to program more generally acceptable social values. There is a long history of programs being discontinued, not being aired at all by the networks, or not being relayed by an affiliate forone or more of the above reasons.

The social structure of commercial television will, therefore, determine, to a large extent, the use of myths, symbols and stereotypes. Myths, the collective imaginative life of a people, will be presented only in terms of the most popular interpretations. While a single myth might have numerous interpretations if examined carefully, television examines only those aspects that are easily acceptable to the vast audience. Programming created specifically for television deals almost exclusively with right and wrong behavior and good characters and bad characters. Television is not a land of subtleties, but is a land of actions and characters that are easily comprehensible. This accounts for there being so many heroic-type characters on commercial television. Dixon Wecter's description of "the hero" makes clear why television, the medium founded on attracting the largest possible audience drawn from every socio-economic and socio-political spectrum, is fertile ground for the development of heroes.

> [The hero] is an index to the collective mind and heart. His deeds and qualities are those which millions endorse. He speaks words that multitudes want said; he stands for things they are often willing to spill their blood for. His legend is the mirror of the folk soul. 7

On commercial television the hero becomes the recurring symbol who acts out the majority-acceptable imagination of the American public and the majority-understood stereotype of good-guy. Other stereotypes--bad-guy, suburban housewife, Jewish mother, thug--fill in the dramatic spaces.

The social structure of other mass media dictate different kinds of content development. Popular or drug-store-fiction, for example, appeals to a limited audience whose demographics are definable and who may be more receptive to ideas outside the mainstream of majority opinion. In the same way, publishers of Ladies Home Journal, Redbook or McCalls know that economics dictate appealing to a particular audience and marketing the product in particular ways. The audience lifestyle and desires dictate the endorsement of American family life, home cooking, family crafts, elegant entertaining and home-front sustenance. A photograph of a living room in these publications generates notions of restrained suburban family living whereas this same symbol in another publication might engender notions of a polished bachelor-pad and sexual encounters. The symbols would be interpreted in light of the social functions of the publication and the social stratification of the audience. Because of the social functions they serve, all the fiction in the publications directed to American housewives reaffirms American family values; a wife may consider the possibility of an extra-marital affair, but she will always opt for hubby with all of his foibles. The use of all literary conventions will ultimately by constrained by the social structure of the particular mass medium--its audience, its social function, its economics, its history, its development, and its management goals and personalities.

High culture is less likely to be limited in its utilization of myths, symbols and stereotypes than is mass culture because high art functions with fewer social restraints. The artist of high art is not concerned about appealing to a large heterogeneous audience, not concerned about satisfying the management censor, not concerned about government regulations, not concerned about industrial self-regulations, and not concerned about marketing strategies. Historically, the artist of high culture satisfies her/his own sense of creativity/invention and might be recognized only very late in life. History is replete with stories of the poor struggling artist concerned only about quality, and history is also replete with stories of the public artist, creating for the patrons and satisfying all of the demands of marketability. The status quo has blurred, to some extent, this distinction between the elite artist and the public artist, since even the elite artist is now marketed by the large book publishing companies and art galleries and appears on the Today Show and the Tonight Show and the Tomorrow Show and publications are approved by an editorial staff. But, even so, the elite artist functions with fewer social structural restraints than does the popular artist.

The physical structure of the medium will also dictate the use of myths, symbols and stereotypes. The physical structure is the medium itself--the smallness of the screen of the television set, the chapter structure of the novel, the darkness of the cinema, the colored jells and sound effects at the theatre. Horace Newcomb makes it clear how the physical structure of a medium affects its content:

> The smallness of the television screen has always been its most noticeable physical feature. It means something that the art created for television appears on an object that can be part of one's living

> room, exists as furniture. It is significant that one can walk around the entire apparatus. Such smallness suits television for intimacy; its presence brings people into the viewer's home to act out dramas. But from the beginning, because the art was visual, it was most commonly compared to the movies. The attempts to marry old-style, theatre-oriented movies with television are stylistic failures even though they have proven to be a financial success. Television is at its best when it offers us faces, reactions, explorations of emotions registered by human beings. The importance is not placed on the action, though that is certainly vital as stimulus. Rather, it is on the reaction to the action to the human response. 8

Entrepreneurs have attempted to cash-in on cheap film making by filming a theatre production for the cinema, but the limitation of camera movement and the actors' performing for a live audience instead of for the camera lens makes these efforts artistic failures. Even "Give Em Hell Harry," one of the most successful theatre productions put on celluoid, is still just one medium observing another. Quality in media productions is obtained only when the physical characteristics of the medium are integrated into the total product.

Physical restraints on artistic output become obvious when comparing creative techniques used in various media. How is the concept of tension created in the various media, for example?

The novel builds to an exciting moment and cuts to a new chapter or cuts to the development of other characters or events. The reader moves to the next chapter to find out how the complication will be resolved and encounters another complication which is continued in the next chapter.

In the theatre, the lighting, sound effects and the total mannerisms of the actors create tension. Dark colored lights tell the audience that trouble lurks, sound effects pierce the environment and the entire body of the actor is involved in conveying the message of alarm.

On television the sound elements are probably the most prominent method of creating tension. Television is a secondary activity, which means that its audience is usually engaged in another activity and only casually watches the small screen. The alarming tempo and the eerie musical chinks indicate to the auditor that the good-guy is in trouble or that the bad-guy is about to be captured or that the plot has thickened. Even a child who has not been involved in the program development will tune into the final television program segments because the sounds summon attention. The next most important element for creating tension in television is the close-up--the tight shot showing the twitch in the jaw muscle and the fear in wide eyes. Lighting in television may also be a minor factor in creating tension.

In the cinema, tension is created by the total involvement of the audience. The darkness of the movie house and the largeness of the screen make cinema viewing a primary activity. When the house is darkened and the outside world dissolves, the large screen transports the viewer to an all-involving new world and a total artistic experience. Tension is not totally dependent on the sounds and the close-ups; the artist has the complete attention of the viewer and can experiment with camera angles and fields of view.

Even the same artistic genre will vary in its development from medium to medium because of both the social and physical structures of the particular medium. Newcomb observed:

> . . . with television there is another level of complexity, for we quickly realize that the television Western is more akin to the television mystery than it is to the literary Western. It is

> even possible to say that the television mystery or Western is more comparable to the television situation comedy than to the literary forms of either of those two standard formulas. Television creates its own version of the traditional popular arts." 9

The combination of social and physical structural factors will thus control to a great extent the use of myths, symbols and stereotypes. The combination of these social and physical restraints are easily listed for at least one medium--commercial television:

1. Time limits (Thirty-minutes or one hour.)
2. Time divisions (Segmentation for commercial breaks and station breaks.)
3. Advertisers (Program ideas must sell.)
4. Market research (All program ideas are tested and retested; new concepts are untested and are less likely to be bought by networks.)
5. Competition between networks (Known program formulas are sellable and draw audiences; network competition limits new program ideas.)
6. Current structure of the industry

The ways in which these physical and social structural factors affect a popular artist can be seen in the following statement by a writer of half-hour television programs:

> Okay, so you have 23 minutes to establish your exposition, to delineate characters, work to your climax with as much action as possible, and bring your tale to a thrilling and moral conclusion. Oh yes, you must provide suitable breaks for commercials, too. You use as many shortcuts as possible: you want to paint a "bad" guy or someone outside the social norm quickly and simply. You fall back on a stereotype of some sort which presumably your audience will understand without full explanation. . . . The run-of-the-mill half-hour TV film is as stylized as the Japanese Noh play. 10

Because of its physical and social structural features--its furniture-like characteristics, its secondary role in daily activity, its social functions, its vast audiences--television has adapted its content to fit these

structural characteristics. In its beginning, observers thought television was doomed to failure because of its physical characteristics, but TV programming has become part and parcel of its structure. In 1939 a reporter for the New York Times wrote:

> "The problem with television is that the people must sit and keep their eyes glued on a screen; the average American family hasn't time for it. Therefore, the showmen are convinced that for this reason, if for no other, television will never be a serious competition of broadcasting." 11

Indeed, the physical structure of television could have doomed it to failure, if it had not adapted. No one would spend hours sitting and keeping "their eyes glued on a small screen." But, with common interpretations of myths repeated over and over again with different characters and settings and easily understandable symbols and communication short-cuts or stereotypes (musical, character developmental, settings, etc.), the television audience can pursue hundreds of activities and "watch" television too.

Content can be viewed in terms of the physical and social structure of the medium, but there is also an important structural consideration in a work of popular art itself. Most observers of popular art define the inherent structure in that art as formulaic. John Cawelti has defined formula as:

> . . . a conventional system for structuring cultural products. It can be distinguished from invented structures which are new ways of organizing art. Like the distinction between convention and invention, the distinction between formula and structure can be envisaged as a continuum between two poles; one pole is that of a completely conventional structure of conventions--an episode of the Lone Ranger or one of the Tarzan books comes close to this pole; the other end of the continuum is a completely original structure which orders inventions--Finnegans Wake is perhaps the ultimate example. 12

Formulas are easily adaptable to mass media because the audiences for popular art are most often seeking release, relief, and transformation

from the immediate by a quick and easily attainable medium of transport--TV, dime-store novels, magazines, movies. High art requires major efforts of concentration and commitment, whereas popular art offers similar experiences of catharsis and requires only minor commitments of time, an often only divided time at that. Concerning popular art and its audience, Tom Sullivan has written:

> A formula plot is one in which conventional characters engage in conventional action involving conventional incidents. Since the plot is conventional, a very similar explanation of experience prevails in all of the stories which adhere to the same formula. One reason for the popularity . . . of a particular explanation provided by a specific formulaic plot is the wide-spread acceptance of that explanation. In spite of the many arguments that fiction appeals because it presents the mysterious, or the unknown, we tend . . . to be most comfortable with those stories that reaffirm our beliefs, thereby telling us what we already know. . . . a formulaic plot . . . is one means by which a "constituency" . . . reaffirms group values. It is through formulaic stories, the plots of which rigidly reaffirm their beliefs, that many readers and viewers find ways to explain the events in their world. 13

To understand how a formula is constructed, the inherent structure must be carefully examined from a variety of perspectives. Cawelti has been the academic leader in formula research and his book titled The Six-Gun Mystique is, at present, the most in-depth exploration of a particular formula to be offered by a popular culture researcher. Cawelti explores the Western formula--the film Western, the television Western, the novel as Western. In defining the Western formula, he deals with: "setting;" "complex of characters;" "types of situations;" and "patterns of action."

Considering "setting" Cawelti sees the Western set in an epic moment of conflict between lawlessness and the advance of structured civilization. Cawelti notes that in the Western ". . . the social and historical aspects of setting are perhaps even more important in defining the Western formula than geography." (p. 38) The western half of the United States

became America's last great frontier and the ultimate challenge to individual and institutional survival. The geographic setting is always west of the Mississippi River--the lonely rolling plains of Kansas; the arid, tempestuous Mexican border areas; the mountainous, dirty little mining towns. Cawelti observes that costumes have also become part of the setting and we can detect Western characters and know something about their roles by the costumes they wear.

Cawelti sees Western characters as divided into three groups: "the townspeople or agents of civilization;" "the savages or outlaws who threaten this first group;" and "the heroes . . . who possess many qualities and skills of the savages, but are fundamentally committed to the townspeople." (p. 46) Plots revolve around the relationships of these three types of characters.

The "situations and patterns of action" develop out of the epic moment "when the values and disciplines of American society stand balanced against savage wilderness." (p. 66) The hero, who is no stranger to violence and savage methods, maintains the "commitment to the agents and values of civilization." The hero is usually cleaner, more physically appealing and better educated than the adversary--indications that he has internalized civilized standards in an uncivilized environment.

While Cawelti has defined the formula in terms of a genre (the Western), Horace Newcomb has gone beyond the definition of a popular genre-formula and has examined formulas in terms of a particular medium--commercial television. Newcomb would agree with Cawelti that popular art is formulaic and that formulas can be presented for Westerns, romance novels, pornographic films, dime-store detective novels, etc., but, Newcomb believes that the social and physical characteristics of a medium account for closer relationships

in formula than do genre distinctions. Newcomb sees the television Western as more closely related to the television situation comedy, the television soap opera, or TV news than to the Western in film or novel form. Newcomb sees three elements of television as composing a frame for a television aesthetic, and as uniting all of television's formulas--intimacy, continuity, and history.

The sense of intimacy that is apparent in the TV situation comedy or soap opera is also apparent in the television Western. While a key element of the film Western is its scenes of vast expanses of land--the rugged desert, the lonely plains, the isolated mountains--the TV Western revolves around smaller sets--a saloon, a cabin, or a campfire. We never really sense the vast Kansas prairie of "Gunsmoke" or the immense lands of the Ponderosa. Just as in the television situation comedy or television domestic comedy or the television soap opera, we concentrate on individuals caught up in individual relationships. Television lends itself to the examination of the individual situation; it is the medium most adapted to the close-up.

Newcomb argues that continuity on television is really illusive. The viewer believes that there is continuity to the program context because there are twenty-six programs in a series; but when more closely examined, the series lack continuity because they are really self-contained weekly episodes that have their own beginning and ending. "Because . . . shows conclude dramatically at the end of a single episode, and because the necessity for a popular response calls for an affirmative ending, we lose sight of the true complexity of many of the issues examined."[14] Because of this surface continuity and lack of real continuity, television formulas have a strong resemblance in plot development and denouement. Major events must happen at

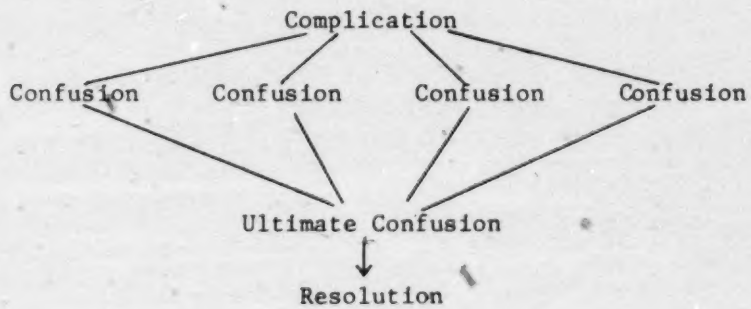
specific points in the thirty-minute time frame to allow a satisfactory affirmative conclusion. This structure of twenty-six individual episodes all developing and ending within the same time limit accounts for a similarity of plot structure within all types of television programming.

According to Newcomb, the third element which unites all television formula is history:

> The television formula requires that we use our contemporary historical concerns as subject matter. In part we deal with them in historical fashion, citing current facts and figures. But we also return these issues to an oder time, or we create a character from an older time, so that they can be dealt with firmly, quickly, and within a system of sound and observable values. That vaguely defined "older time" becomes the mythical realm of television. 15

Thus, in television formula, times are mixed and contemporary conflicts can be settled in the old West or Old England or in the years 2000 or 2100. In television, history provides settings and costumes, but, not necessarily plot or conflict.

With this understanding of the medium defining the formula, in his book TV the Most Popular Art, Newcomb presents television formulas for: situation and domestic comedies; adventure shows; soap operas and news programs. In its simplest form, situation comedy can, for example, be defined as: complication leading to a multiplicity of confusion and finally to the ultimate confusion, which can't get any more confused, and thus must lead to the resolution.



> . . . confusion [is] the heart of what is comic about situation comedy. Situation comedy, like most television formulas, does not conform to the artistic standards of "high" art in the development of action, character, event, and conclusion. Events, the things that "happen" in sit com, are composed solely of confusion, and the more thorough the confusion, the more the audience is let in on a joke that will backfire on the characters, the more comic the episode. Individual shows are frequently structured on various layers of confusion that can be generated out of a single complication . . . the characters slip into deeper and deeper confusion. Expression and reaction follow complication, gesture follows reaction, slapstick follows gesture.[16]

In the situation comedy, both the characters and the settings can also be defined in terms of formula. Newcomb contends, for example, that all situation formula characters have the same predominant traits:

1. They are young American suburbanites.
2. They are neat.
3. They are beautiful and healthy.
4. They are prosperous.
5. They are never troubled in profound ways.
6. Sorrow never touches their lives.
7. Stress, as a result of confusion, is always funny.
8. They are surrounded by supporting characters which fall into two types--individual characters who fall victim to the star's antics and the regular characters who serve as foils for the antics.
9. They exhibit great innocence and do not seem to understand that particular actions are absolutely certain to lead to particular consequences.
10. They are frequently unreal--"Bewitched," "Gilligan's Island," "The Beverly Hillbillies," "I Dream of Jeannie."

And situation comedy settings can be characterized in terms of:

1. One-room sets--the action occurs in the living room, dining room, kitchen, etc.
2. Prosperous, but not elegant surroundings.
3. Neatness.

With the television situation comedy formula easily understood by the audience, complete attention from the auditors is not required. A standard utilization of myth, symbol, stereotype in a completely anticipated formula is what the medium demands and what the audience gets. A development of complicated myths or symbols or the lack of stereotypes would require complete attention from the auditors and would prohibit the viewer sitting in the easy chair with divided attention--reading the newspaper and "watching" TV, for example.

The television mystery is another example of the TV formula which delivers exactly what is expected in terms of myths, symbols and stereotypes.

> . . . the world of the popular mystery story [has been] expressed for us over and over again as novel, movie, radio series, comic strip and comic book. . . . For television, then, the task is to draw on a vast body of material which could appeal to an already existing mass audience in an even more massive way, to use the mystery form in existence, and to begin to adapt the form in terms of its own aesthetic attitudes, its own set of cultural expressions."[17]

In its broadest sense the television mystery can be defined in terms of: a setting which is "a world of pain and corruption"; this setting is instrumental in creating a crime (usually murder), which challenges the skills of a detective; the detective follows numerous leads which prove to be dead-ends; suspense increases; the detective cleverly reassembles the clues to develop a unique solution which indeed turns out to be the right solution to the mystery and leads to the conclusion.

Because the mystery form demanded violence, action, adventure, tension and excitement, and because television demanded a sensitivity to social values and a concern for a delicate mass audience, the television mystery had to develop some unique formats. Newcomb detects at least four types of television mysteries which follow the same broad formula structure as any mystery/detective:

1) the documentary style mystery; 2) the private-eye mystery; 3) the anti-authority, rebellious detective; 4) the family-group detective programs.

The documentary style detective program was a means of satisfying the restrictions on television sensationalism and still offering the mass audience adventure and violence. "The more 'realistic' the show, the better. So we come to 'Dragnet' . . . . From the opening sequence of narrator's voice over aerial shots of Los Angeles to the concluding report on the fate of the offenders, 'Dragnet' creates a documentary tone that argues for itself the portrayal of truth rather than fiction."[18] Other mysteries in the documentary format have included: "M Squad," "Naked City," "FBI," and "Highway Patrol."

Programs in the mystery-private-eye tradition have included Perry Mason and a current program, "Rockford Files." The private-eye type character is outside the police department and is summoned to the "crime" by outside forces. "The series seem to mediate between the more hard-boiled detectives and the factual police-oriented shows by offering a complex who-done-it framework for murder."[19]

The third type of television detective program is the family-type mystery which involves a close-knit group working together to solve the crime. This type of program includes: "The Rookies," "Mod-Squad," "Ironside" and "McMillan and Wife." The family-type group is protective of its members and is united in its quest for good over evil.

The fourth type of detective program can be characterized by the star--the angry, disillusioned individual who knows that corruption can be deterred but never defeated. This lonely individual strives for at least minimum order in a chaotic world. The detective is on the side of law-and-order, but isn't opposed to stepping outside the law and using questionable

means to get the really bad guys. This type of mystery seems to be the type most often seen on television today--"Baretta," "Kojak," "Serpico," "Delvecchio." As can be seen by the names of the programs:

> What television now offers in the area of mystery entertainment is a world of personality. Each star brings a different attitude toward the nature of crime. The struggle is not between good and evil, for as in all popular formulas we know that there is no real contest there. Rather, the struggle is between a certain type of detective and the very idea of crime."[20]

All four formats have the usual broad formulaic structure and each has the detective star who has a similar role in every detective formula whether film, novel or television:

> He takes us into the world of pain and corruption and brings us out again in the end. Would we enter such a world without such a guide? Would we enter knowing beforehand that there might not be the safe conclusion at the final moment of tension? The prospect of the mystery is one of forbidden excitement, and the detective allows us to experience it without being dirtied by it.[21]

But, again in this art form as in others, we can see television creating formulas that are unique to itself and can be discussed in terms of television's unique social and physical structure. Myths, symbols, and stereotypes in mass culture can be examined in terms of complex social and cultural relationships surrounding each medium. In his book Open to Criticism, Robert Lewis Shayon makes these complex relationships clearer.

> The mass media are phenomena that transcend even broad worlds of literature. They call for the discovery of new laws, new relationships, new insights into drama, ritual and mythology, into the engagement of minds in a context where psychological sensations are deliberately produced for non-imaginative ends, where audiences are created, cultivated and maintained for sale, where they are trained in nondiscrimination and hypnotized by the mechanical illusion of delight. When the symbols that swirl around the planet Earth are manufactured by artists who have placed their talents at the deposition of salesmen, criticism must at last acknowledge that "literature" has been transcended and that the dialectics of evolutionary action have brought the arts to a new level of practice and significance.[22]

It is a recent phenomenon for scholars to be interested in what Shayon calls the new level of practice and significance in popular art. But, scholars are now interested in popular art as a means of telling us more about ourselves and about art forms. John Cawelti has observed that a more careful examination of patterns in popular art would tell us more about our society and its basic values and attitudes. He notes further that: "In addition, the concept of the formula as a synthesis of cultural symbols, themes and myths with more universal story archetypes should help us to see where a literary pattern has been shaped by the needs of a particular story form, and to differentiate these from patterns which are expressions of the network of assumptions of a particular culture."[23]

Myths, symbols and stereotypes in mass art can be examined in terms of structure--the social and physical structure of the particular medium which directly affects the medium content and the inherent structure of the art form itself, or the formula. By more carefully examining myths, symbols, and stereotypes in popular art we can learn more about values in this society and about the various audiences to whom a particular kind of popular art appeals.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Ray L. Birdwhistell, Kinesics and Context (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970), p. 95.

[2]John G. Cawelti, "Myth, Symbol, and Formula," Journal of Popular Culture, VIII:1 (Summer, 1974), p. 3.

[3]Ibid., p. 1.

[4]David Madden, "The Necessity for An Aesthetics of Popular Culture," Journal of Popular Culture, VII:1 (Summer, 1973), p. 13.

[5]Horace Newcomb, TV the Most Popular Art (New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1974), p. 15.

[6]Elihu Katz and David Foulkes, "The Use of the Mass Media as 'Escape': Clarification of a Concept," Public Opinion Quarterly, 1969, p. 378.

[7]Dixon Wecter, The Hero in America: A Chronicle of Hero-Worship (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1963), p. 488.

[8]Newcomb, TV the Most Popular Art, p. 245-246.

[9]Ibid., p. 23.

[10]Quoted in George Gerbner, "The Structure and Process of Television Content Regulation in the United States," in Television and Social Behavior, Vol. 1, pp. 386-414.

[11]New York Times, March 19, 1939.

[12]John Cawelti, The Six-Gun Mystique (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University Press, 1971), p. 29.

[13]Tom R. Sullivan, "The Use of a Fictional Formula: The Selkirk Mother Lode," Journal of Popular Culture, VIII:1 (Summer, 1974), pp. 35-36.

[14]Newcomb, TV the Most Popular Art, p. 253-254.

[15]Ibid., p. 258.

[16]Ibid., pp. 33-34.

[17]Ibid., pp. 83-84.

[18]Ibid., p. 91.

[19]Ibid., p. 95.

[20]Ibid., p. 101.

[21]Ibid., p. 86.

[22]Robert Lewis Shayon, Open to Criticism (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), pp. 48-49.

[23]Cawelti, Journal of Popular Culture, p. 7.